

Social Practice: *Supporting the Arts Locally* by Jason Engelund

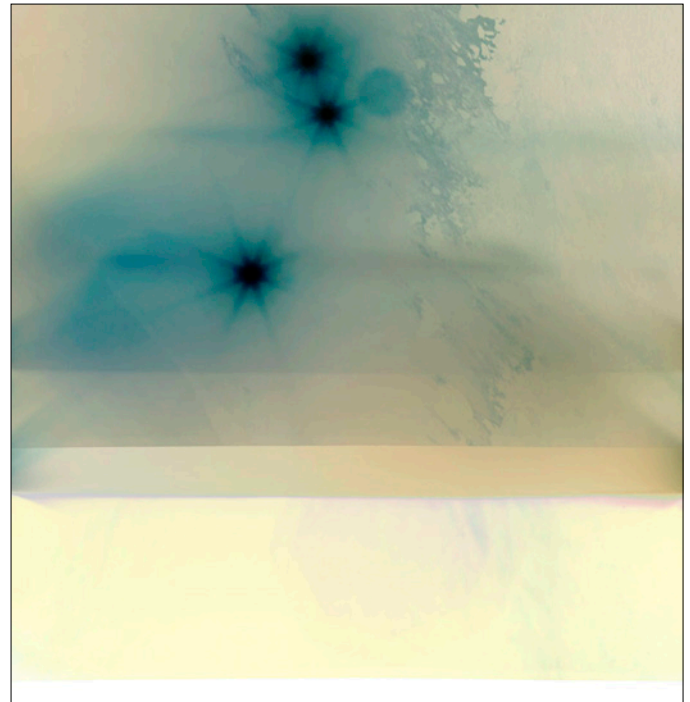
Creating Arts Opportunities

My art practice includes social projects in which I collaborate with communities and organizations to infuse the arts into people's lives. My goal is to bring aesthetic awareness and creative practice to our everyday life. The arts get us in touch with our senses and with that they create a habit of reflection, which leads to critical thinking. Although critical thinking is considered an important 21st century skill, arts education struggles within our public education system. A Social Arts project might then be "what to create that will address the issue and support critical thinking?"

I began to look at the art education in my daughter's school (1st grade), and soon began working with the school district's Superintendent. Our idea was to fashion arts resources for teachers across the district, making the arts more available to everyone, not just one school. Since the 1970s, teacher credential programs in California have not included arts or teaching the arts required training. Many elementary school teachers are faced with being required by the State Board of Education to teach the arts, but they have little or no background. With little support and low emphasis the arts, visual art, music, drama and dance are skipped over.

Braiding Together Community Institutions for Sustainability in Supporting the Arts

In Community Arts and Social Practices one thing that I always focus on is sustainability. Real change requires time, and how we can successfully build in sustainability to arts advocacy efforts is an important problem. Braiding together community institutions is a way to create stronger support structures. Enter the Adobe Art Center. After teaching drawing fundamentals and helping in the gallery at the art center I have been hired as studio director, nominally part time, but I am able to create change. In small ways the Castro Valley Unified School District and the Hayward Area Parks and Recreation District, which oversees the art center, ironically on school owned property, are now collaborating. We've coordinated field trips from schools across the district and helped students learn local history through a recent history exhibition. I hope to embed the Arts Resources for Teachers website within the art center, perhaps through a semi-permanent display plus teaching artist staff on hand to answer questions a k-12 teacher might have regarding an art issue. In the long term hopefully we can bring together the teachers, parents, students, artists and share opportunities in both the schools and art center.



Jason Engelund, *Seeing the Fields of Seeing*, Photograph

Adobe Art Center

Nordic 5 Arts will also be a part of events at the Adobe Art Center. During my time helping as an interim gallery director, I was asked to recommend arts groups for the upcoming calendar year. Nordic 5 Arts of course came to mind. I put our group in touch with the new gallery director Leah Virsik and, as a result, we have our traveling show "Runes Revealed" scheduled for December 2, 2017 - January 13, 2018.

Give an Art Demo?

A.R.T. Inc., an artists' group associated with the Adobe Art Center, hosts artist demos every 2nd Saturday of the month. If you are interested in presenting a demonstration in 2-D work (painting, drawing) please contact me. They offer a \$150 stipend for a two-hour demo. Email me at jasonengelund@gmail.com. The artists' demos are free and open to the public to attend.

Art in the Park, Food Truck Nights

Visit the Adobe Art Center on the 1st Tuesdays of the month, May 2nd - Nov 7, for our brand new "Art in the Park" nights. There will be food trucks, park activities, and open doors to the Adobe Gallery with family friendly art activities. Double check our Facebook page for updates at [Facebook.com/AdobeArtCenterandGallery/](https://www.facebook.com/AdobeArtCenterandGallery/)

artist news

This fall, **Colette Crutcher** installed a new piece of tile art at Daniel Webster Elementary School in San Francisco's Potrero Hill. The piece is titled, "Reading in the Rain" and incorporates text from a variety of children's literature (photo Right.) It is a tribute to Dena Fischer, a mother who spearheaded the campaign to fund the school's beautiful new library. Dena died of cancer in 2015. Colette has also recently completed a two-year tile project assisting the Randall Children's Museum in San Francisco with fundraising for its renovation. The Museum will reopen in the next few months and Colette's piece will be displayed in the new café.

Mark Erickson has been involved in many exhibits lately. He was in a group exhibition, showing work with his wife, Elena Erickson, at Frederick Holmes Gallery in Seattle that will be on view through the end of October 2017. He is also currently in a group show at Robert Green Fine Arts in Mill Valley, and in a group exhibition at Angela King Gallery in New Orleans, which is an ongoing exhibit. Mark and Elena will have 2-person show at Caffe 817 in oldtown Oakland in January 2018. He and Elena split their time between their studio in Oakland and a home in Venice, CA, painting as much as they can. The two are currently working extensively on what is now called "Family Photograph Restorations Project." They recently spent three weeks in NYC, overdosing on art and walking and hanging out in Washington Square Park, retracing his mother Bernice's and grandmother Blanche's painting days in the 1930s through 1950s. He includes here nicely restored photos of them in Greenwich Village in the 1940s. MarkErickson.com.

Pam Fingado will be in a group exhibition based on a proposal she submitted, "Art As Spiritual Metaphor" at the Harrington Art Gallery, 4444 Railroad Ave in Pleasanton, CA, November 1 through December 16, 2017. The opening reception will be held Thursday, November 2, 7-9:00 PM. She also has work from the "Paper Mandala Series" on display through December at the San Pablo Community Center, 2450 Rd 20, San Pablo, CA. Barring any re-writes or edits, she reports that her short book, ("but long on completing"), "An Artist's Guide to Becoming More Creative," will be available on Amazon as a POD or e-book in October. Printed books are in the works too.

In September, **Marc Ellen Hamel** had a solo show, "City Streets and Rural Paths," at Main Street Artists Gallery in Quincy, CA. She presented a series of 11 oil paintings in her recent impressionist style called "Rural Paths," (see painting page) and 14 framed monotypes from her "City Streets" series. The artist reception on September 8 was very well attended. The owners of Studio Gallery in San Francisco installed 10 of Marc Ellen's artworks in the law offices of Hanson Bridgett during June-October to enhance their workplace--and perhaps purchase some of the work. She is especially excited to report that she was recently contacted by the owner of a new gallery soon to open in Palm Springs called Barba Contemporary Art. He plans to exhibit a number of her paintings and monotypes along with other artists he has discovered. The inaugural reception will be on November 11, 2017.

Maj-Britt Hilstrom shared this news of a surprise meeting: "On September 12, 2017, I had just entered the Gift Shop at the Modern Art Museum in Stockholm, Sweden. Imagine my surprise when I heard my name called -- "Maj-Britt, Maj-Britt." It was Debra Jewell, another member of Nordic 5 Arts. How wonderful to see a familiar face in an unfamiliar setting! We chatted about our travel



Top to bottom

Tile art by Colette Crutcher at Daniel Webster Elementary School, San Francisco (detail)
Photography restoration by Mark Erickson: his mother and grandmother
Maj-Britt Hilstrom viewing a Matisse at the Modern Art Museum, Stockholm

adventures and then went on to see the Museum's outstanding, eclectic collection of contemporary art. On the previous page, I admire a Matisse I had never seen before, which is in their permanent collection."

Kristin Lindseth reports that she has been in the following exhibits so far this year: *Abstractions*, Marin MOCA, Palm Drive, Novato, CA, October 14-November 19; *California Sculpture Slam*, San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, San Luis Obispo, CA, September 1- October 30; *Brushstrokes*, San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, San Luis Obispo, CA, June-July; *Woven Heritage*; International Miniature Printmaking Exhibition, Zayed University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates; and the *25th Parkside National Small Print Exhibition*, University of Wisconsin, Parkside Art Galleries, Kenosha, WI, February 23-April 12. She now has work in the permanent collections of three museums of art: Morris Graves Museum of Art, Eureka, CA, Triton Museum of Art, Santa Clara, CA; Fayed University Art Gallery in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. She is currently working on an entirely new series of sculptures. No wonder she writes, "It has been a great year!"

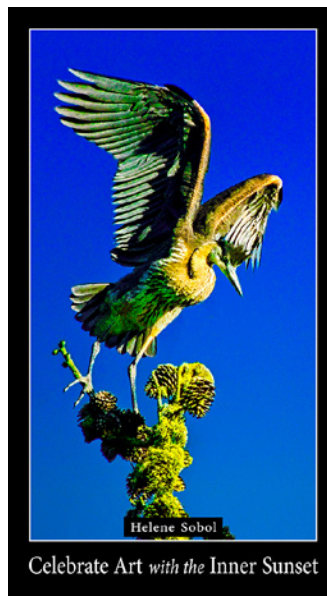
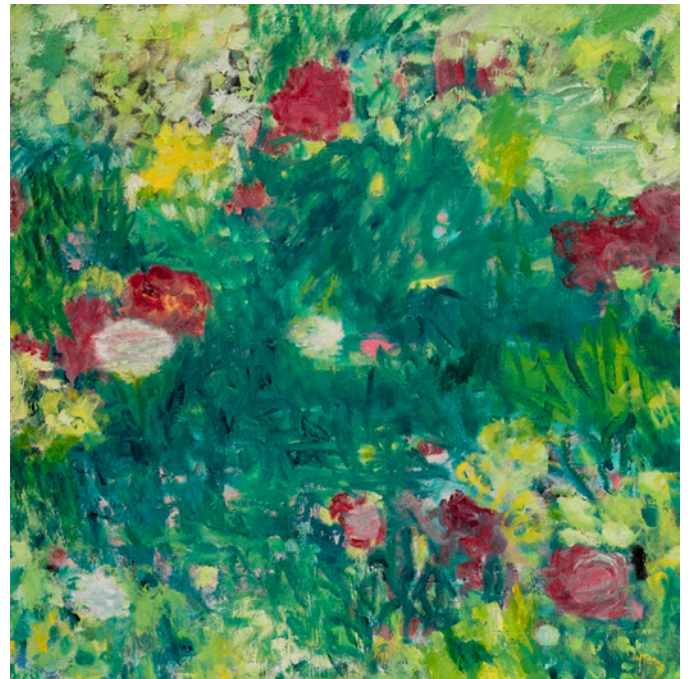
Dorothy McCall reports that she gave a talk in October on Norwegian art, "On the Wall in the Mind and Through the Heart," in Conway, north of Seattle. Her presentation focused on how Norwegian art reveals reasons that Norwegians left their homeland for the new world. This summer she went to the Farnsworth Museum in Maine and saw the Andrew Wyeth collection. It will open at the Seattle Art Museum on October 19th. The new Nordic Heritage Museum will open in Seattle in early 2018 and the king of Norway will be attending, nordicmuseum.org. Dorothy is also learning to paint in watercolor and loving it.

In June, **Diane Rusnak** saw her painting "Ohio Ghost Home" (which was shown in our "Runes Revealed" exhibit in the past) newly installed in the Cleveland University Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital. In January 2018, Diane and Barbara Stevens Strauss will show artwork in the Orinda Library Art Gallery, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda. Opening Sunday, January 7, 2:30-4:30 PM.

Through November 3, **Helene Sobol** has three photographs in the juried exhibition "Loving Golden Gate Park" at SFWA Artists Gallery in San Francisco. In December through May 2018, two of her works will be seen on banners on Irving Street in San Francisco (photos Right).

In April, **Barbara Stevens Strauss** curated an exhibit called "InFusion" at the Berkeley Art Center. The event was a celebration of the Berkeley-Sakai Sister City Association's 50th anniversary. The exhibit featured the work of fine artists influenced by Japanese aesthetics, including large scale installations by textile artist Kimiko Kogure and freestanding sculpture from Keiko Nelson's artist residency at the de Young Museum. Full-size paper kimonos were suspended from the ceiling. Stevens Strauss presented her newest raku sculptures, as well as large-scale ikebana. The mayors of both Berkeley and Sakai, Japan, were in attendance and about 200 people enjoyed the opening reception on April 20.

Helena Tiainen has been involved in creative interior design art projects for her clientele. Much can be seen by visiting her website, interiordesignandorganizing.com. Helena offers customized art, interior design and professional organizing services, while still keeping up her painting practice.



Images, top to bottom

Marc Ellen Hamel *In My Sister's Garden*, Oil on canvas (detail)

Helene Sobol *Celebrate Art with the Inner Sunset*, Irving St., San Francisco

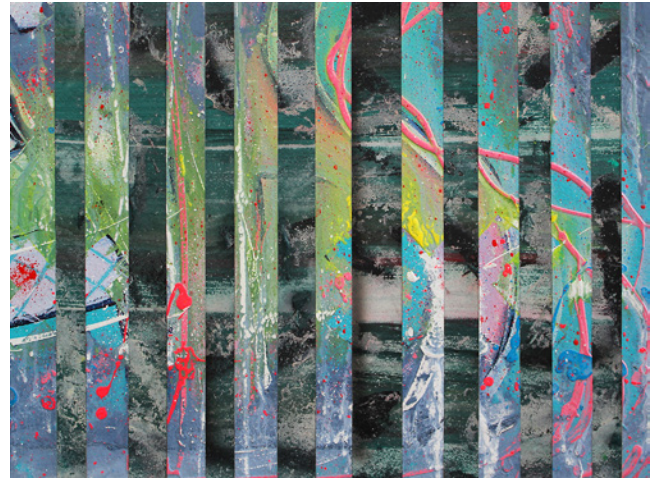
Barbara Stevens Strauss 3 Raku Sculptures, *InFusion*, Berkeley Art Center

reflections on showing art in cafés and bars

by Mark Erickson

It's funny, back when I was younger, my first art shows were in bars, restaurants, and cafés. It was never very profitable, but I did them and enjoyed it. In the 1980s, I became pretty successful and was locked into a 6-year+ contract that permitted me only to show in specific galleries in about 8 cities in the US. Cafés and bars were out then and I spent a lot of time in many of them in San Francisco and I missed that level of exhibiting. I started getting offers that I had to refuse. But I got over that since I was selling up to 75-100 paintings a year and life was changing drastically. I bought a house in Mill Valley and kept my studio in San Francisco. After I got out of that contract in the 1990s, I only exhibited in galleries.

Time marches on. So, now, after over 25+ years since I showed in cafés and restaurants, the folks at one of our favorite places in Oakland, Caffe 817, asked my wife Elena and me to do a 2-person show in early 2018. Since Elena is just starting out compared to me, I decided "why not?" and got excited about the idea. I recall seeing my work way back when at Vesuvio's Bar and Mario's Bohemian Cigar Store Café in North Beach and it was good, especially the bars. I would hold court under my paintings. It really was a decent start, I felt. Even in Specs' Bar (Specs' Twelve Adler Museum Café), where we all spent many hours back in my San Francisco Art Institute days. It was a thrill when I was in my early 20s. So, in that spirit, I said yes. Plus, for Elena it will be good to see her work regularly up on the wall over coffee or lunch. When we show in galleries, it's not as convenient since we are not in the habit of hanging out in galleries. Seeing a show once or twice is good enough for me. So there you have it. Elena and I will be exhibiting in early 2018 at Caffe 817 in Old Town Oakland. A great place to hang in the sun and let the day stroll by.



Artworks by Mark and Elena Erickson

Above: *The Pull of the Ribbon*, Acrylic, Paper, Collage

Lower left:

Traces of the Unexpected, Acrylic on wood panel (detail)

calendar

Fall Membership Meeting

Saturday, Oct 21, 2017, 11 AM

Hosted by Colette Crutcher

Runes Revealed - Contemporary Artists Respond to an Ancient Alphabet

December 2, 2017 - January 13, 2018

Adobe Art Gallery

20395 San Miguel Ave, Castro Valley, CA

Reception December 2, 1-3 PM

adobegallery.org

Nordic Voyage - A Sense of Place

March 2 - April 7, 2018

Harrington Gallery at Firehouse Arts Center

4444 Railroad Avenue, Pleasanton, CA 94566

Reception Thursday, March 1, 7-9 PM

firehousearts.org

to see artist pages and the "Runes Revealed" catalog visit nordic5arts.com
thank you to everyone who contributed copy and photos to this issue of the newsbrief!

Nordic 5 Arts Co-coordinators: Marc Ellen Hamel and Debra Jewell

Exhibitions Committee: Loren Rehbok, Pam Fingado, Ellen Faris **Secretary:** Colette Crutcher **Treasurer:** Lee Williams

Newsbrief Committee: Marc Ellen Hamel, Editor; Helene Sobol, Associate Editor and Designer

Olivia Eielson, Elizabeth Stokkebye **Website:** Helene Sobol

The nordic 5 arts NEWSBRIEF is published in spring and fall.

The publication supports and promotes artists with Nordic heritage in the San Francisco Bay Area. Subscription \$10; membership dues \$30.